

Schwarzenegger going comic route

HOLLYWOOD — Arnold Schwarzenegger will go the comic route again with Warner Bros. "The Critics' Choice" — as soon as he makes Carolco's "Total Recall."

He anticipates starting the Warner Bros. comedy this fall, and says the sci-fi "Recall" "will start as scheduled in March" — adding that reports of an earlier '89 start date were off base.

"I'm a ski bum. I never work before March — and have to be begged to work even then, and given assurance I'll be able to get my 30 days of skiing in. Carolco has been phoning and saying 'The plane is ready, where do you want to go? The snow is great in Aspen, in Vail ...'"

One thing's for sure: Schwarzenegger's certainly risen to the rank of superstar — especially after "Twins," which could end up as big a hit abroad as it is in the states. It started its overseas run last week in Australia with a sizzling average of more than \$16,000 per screen.

"People are going crazy for it; it's a wonderful smash." Yet the thought of doing a "Twins II" leaves him cold.

He notes, "They wanted me to do sequels of 'Predator' and 'Commando' but I was never fond of doing sequels; there are so many interesting projects out there I would rather do."

ON THE OTHER HAND: "Highlander" didn't set any box office records when it hit the screen in 1986. But actor Christopher Lambert reports that a sequel to the mythic adventure tale will be made this year — and that he's set to reprise his role as star.

"The script is being written now," says the "Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan" actor. He adds of the latest "Highlander" adventure, "It's a really good idea — with lots of action."

He also has several other action projects in the works — including a prison film. And there's still a sequel to the 1984 "Greystoke" being planned.

He has reservations about the latter. "You can do a 'Highlander' sequel — it's an action movie with

Marilyn Beck



something lyric in it. But 'Greystoke,' as a sequel, would have to be absolutely incredible. And so far that's not the case."

Lambert, who married actress Diane Lane and moved to L.A. last year, has been filming the action comedy "Why Me?" with Christopher Lloyd and Kim Griest in Hollywood. He says it's his first comedy and that, "It's different. I like it."

A GHOST OF A CHANCE: Cannon's "Phantom of the Opera" feature, which was supposed to go into production in Budapest early this month with "Nightmare on Elm Street's" Robert Englund starring, will now go before the cameras in March. That makes the race for bringing a new "Phantom" to the big screen even tighter. (There have already been four "Phantom" films.) In addition to the Cannon version (which is based on the classic book about the masked figure who haunts the Paris Opera House), Warner Bros. is developing a "Phantom of the Opera" movie — in which Dustin Hoffman has reportedly expressed an interest in starring. And then there's the yet-to-be-announced screen version of the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical that's taken London and Broadway by storm.

DOING HER BIT: Actress Anne Francis, who's been on the road with a touring company of "Steel Magnolias," is winging back to Los Angeles to join John Glover, singers Belinda Carlisle and Michael Callen, the musical group Alliance and others for the Feb. 3 "The Survivors: A Tribute to People Living with AIDS" benefit at the Wilshire Ebell Theater. She won't be rejoining the "Magnolia" company after the benefit. "I've missed my family, house and pets, so I'm going home to Santa Barbara for a while."

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